

## Alison Arnold Writes...

*(The following article was written by the late Alison Arnold and published in the March 22, 1984 issue of the Clipper — Ed.)*

We can thank the Indians for telling the colonists about shellfish, corn and cranberries. Oysters, clams and lobsters were plentiful, cornbread and corn-on-the-cob became favorite foods, and cranberries were used as food and medicine.

For a long time, clams were used as bait for deep sea fishing and to feed hogs that were allowed to feed on the flats. Shells were left on the shore and were used in road building and in the mixing of plaster.

Clam digging on a large scale was halted by town order in 1898 and clams and quahaugs have been seeded ever since. Clambakes are highlights of the summer season and include fat ears of corn dripping with butter. Lobsters, boiled or baked stuffed, are favorite treats, and what would Thanksgiving dinner be without cranberry sauce or cranberry jelly?

The cranberries that grow abundantly on the low, swampy spots are on the way to becoming a million dollar business. The early settlers used the berries as food and medicine and ship captains were quick to discover their value as a preventative for scurvy. So they carried barrels of them on their voyages as part of the regular diet.

But it was more than 200 years before cranberries became a commercial enterprise. Early in the 19th Century, Stephen Gifford began experimentally raising cranberries for the market. One of the first bogs to prove profitable was that of John S. Loring and also the Fletcher bog near Church St. A third bog near the Duxbury railroad station was built by Joseph Weston in 1872.

At first, cranberries were picked by hand by the neighbors and their children. Pickers received 64 cents a bushel. Later, pronged cranberry scoops made the berry-gathering much more rapid.

Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., has become a leader in the food industry. The Cranberry World Visitors' Center is one of the most popular spots to visit on the Plymouth waterfront. Nearly 325 people are employed at the Ocean Spray headquarters on the waterfront and another 300 are employed at the manufacturing facility in Middleboro.

Massachusetts is now the most productive cranberry growing area in the world. The Indians left a good heritage!



## Duxbury Field Notes

By FAHY BYGATE

This morning I turned my telephone off. Robins have recently appeared in my yard, sitting around in the trees and looking thoughtful. Yesterday they started venturing across the front lawn and I know what that means. I will soon be getting calls asking me if the robins are a sign of spring. The association of robins with the coming of spring is a time-honored and respected one and figured largely in most of my picture books as a child. There is, however, no way for me to tell the difference between newly arrived robins and the ones that wintered over here, deep in the woods. Experts tell me that "southern" robins are somewhat lighter than "northern" robins and my field guide suggests that Eastern robins are darker than western ones and have a little more white in the corner of the tail. The next time an eastern robin and a western one stand side by side in my yard, I plan to investigate this. Meanwhile, I prefer to think that all of the robins in Duxbury this week are most certainly signs of spring and I am already dusting off my warbler song audio tapes.

I have had another in a series of ornithological failures and I am becoming fascinated by it. Last year I made 5, count 'em, 5 trips to outer Cape Cod in bitterly cold and snowy weather to look for what my successful birding friends called "a huge flock" of Bohemian Waxwings. I usually don't even contemplate chasing rarities. It's fruitless and soul-destroying but Bohemian Waxwings are so lovely and I did think that in from a "huge" flock I might find one or 2. I was, of course, wrong. I never find rarities. I don't have what it takes. So why did I think that this year I would be able to find the 4 Mountain Bluebirds that "no one has missed?" So far I have wandered the vicinity of the Marconi Station in Wellfleet twice this month. The first time I went with friends hoping that their innocent presence might dilute the effect I usually have on a rare bird. Sadly, the result was that no one saw anything like a Mountain Bluebird. I repeated the whole performance later in the week with the same result.

The only antidote to this kind of birding downfall is to go birding. I left Wellfleet and headed for Fort Hill in Eastham. I parked at that amazing hilltop, took out my lunch and looked up. There over the top of my box lunch veggie roll-up was a lovely northern Shrike at the top of a bare tree. Its white breast looked like a tiny white light against the somber winter landscape of gray-black marsh and dune and sea. It was a serendipitous moment and I took it as a reminder that as a hunter I make a great veggie roll-up fan.